

# The Normal Neuroses of Childhood

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TOGETHER modern psychiatry and modern education have given to the world an ideal of mental health which goes beyond anything of which our forefathers had any inkling. It used to be sufficient to define normality in terms of conformity to some vague social norm. Today normality stands for an essential and pragmatic concept of human freedom. It means first the strength to withstand the pressure of events; that is, both the ability to stand up under danger without generating excessive anxiety, and also the capacity to suffer deprivation and frustration without generating either blind, excessive anger or paralyzing depression. Secondly, it means the elimination, or at least the reduction to a minimum, of all the unconscious sources of automatic and impulsive behavior.

This implies that the neurotic element in human nature is made up of all of those impulses and trends which are ridden with anxiety, driven by anger, paralyzed by depression, or dominated by unconscious, compulsive forces. Their neurotic nature is manifested further by inflexibility and repetitiveness; by the fact that appeals to reason are fruitless and that they cannot be altered materially by threats, rewards, or punishments. They respond instead only to deep and secret internal phantasies, and cannot be reached by any external reality. This is true whether they manifest themselves in the adult or in the child, and whether we find them in art, in literature, in the criminal courts, or in the neuroses.

Mental health as thus defined is the product of an incessant struggle between many forces, some of them obscure, but others of them quite definite and well defined. Among these varying forces, both physiological and psychological factors are at work; in both groups variations can occur which in turn influence the essential psychological development of every child.

If now we outline briefly the so-called "normal" development of the child, we shall be challenged at once by the fact that transient neuroses *always* occur, even under circumstances which seem to be happy, stable, and propitious. Clearly this fact must be explained before we can understand what special complicating influences are brought about by faulty parental management or by unwholesome parent-child relationships.

Analysis shows the developing child working his way painfully and slowly through a constant inner turmoil of battles between the demands of his instincts, his fantastic distortions of reality, his terrors, real and fancied, and his conscience. It is a battle which shifts continually. The instinctual demands themselves change their natures and their aims. The phantasies slowly give place to a feeling for reality. Fears lose their grip, and in time conscience becomes a manageable and healthy force instead of the automatic, blind tyrant under which the child at first struggles.

In the course of this tumultuous development, transient neurotic episodes appear and disappear. The child is afraid of the dark, of animals, or develops food fads, faulty bowel habits. He is antagonistic to parents, or to brothers and sisters. These and a host of other "phases" are in varying degrees a part of the life history of every child. Neurosis, then, within certain limits is an essential and intrinsic part of childhood. By closer analytical study of childhood we are slowly finding out what its "usual" limits are. There is a point beyond which the neuroses of childhood become too intense and too lasting; and when that limit is passed the "normal" neurotic episode of the normally evolving child becomes the ominous neurosis of the definitely sick child. The difference, however, is quantitative and not qualitative. It is the difference between the child

who somehow masters his neurotic upheavals and the one who is mastered by them.

The so-called healthy and stable child is the one who spontaneously resolves his neurotic episodes within a reasonable time, without obvious after-effects. The clinically "neurotic" child must be helped out of his symptoms by careful therapy, which may involve psychoanalytic treatment. The difference between the two is produced partly by physiological forces, and partly by the cumulative influence of psychic strains.

Strange as it may seem, the exact mode of operation of the physiological components of personality and their variations is, except in extreme cases, even less well understood than are the influences of psychological events. Thus, for instance, prolonged states of malnutrition, colds, repeated minor illnesses, inadequate sleep, must all have cumulative effects upon the functions of the endocrine glands and, therefore, upon the evolution of the personality. Yet precisely what these influences are and how to correct them, is still a matter largely of guess-work, so that the educator must wait upon the slow researches of the few really critical scientists who are working in this field.

#### *Conflicts—Within and Without*

THROUGH psychoanalysis the psychological forces have been more closely studied. By the reconstruction of childhood during the analysis of adults and through the direct psychoanalytic investigation of children it has been found that the constant initial turmoil of childhood is due to a profoundly significant instinctual struggle which continues unabated up to the age of five or six. At this age the instinctual battles usually lessen for a time under the influence of certain definite forces; and it is just at this point that the formal educability of the child (in terms of his capacity for sustained effort to learn) increases by leaps and bounds; it is no mere accident that he is now deemed ready for school. At puberty the battle of the instincts becomes active once more; but usually if the earlier battle has been won successfully the struggle at puberty will also be well won, with a second accession to the educability of the developing adolescent.

In the earliest phase, the child's struggle is with his own instinctual bodily demands, demands which throw him into conflict with the adults around him who insist upon his acquiescence in the restrictions

and mores which must guide conventional adult living. During these early years he must learn to give up such infantile pleasures as sucking, wetting himself, or showing interest in his excrement. He must relinquish full possession of mother or nurse, must learn to "love" his natural rivals, his brothers and sisters. He must subordinate his own ego and his own primitive greed. It is as a result of this struggle with the demands of the adult world that the instinctual battle in the child gradually abates; through the reversal of certain feelings and the sublimation of desires to "higher levels," the child usually achieves a state of relative instinctual calm which is known as the "latency period."

#### *Struggling Toward Freedom*

THIS phase is of vital importance; and parental attitudes toward the steps involved make all the difference between neurotic inhibition, and free and normal living. It is in this phase of the child's development that he emancipates himself from a completely servile attachment to his real parents. In its place he creates a dominating set of personal standards which are built out of his reactions to the image which he has of his parents. This then is a vital phase in the development of the child's character; it is the point at which the parents' own psychic soundness will determine whether the process can go forward normally or will be inhibited and distorted by their own neurotic demands.

One might summarize this outline by saying that the child's struggle is first toward the gratification of his own instinctual bodily needs, and secondly toward a sense of adequacy in satisfying these needs and in dealing with events and people. In pursuit of his gratifications and of his sense of adequacy he becomes involved in a competitive battle which is carried out in the setting of his home and school. Out of these struggles come yearnings, frustrations, angers, fears, hates, discouragement and depression, elation and victory. These are the inevitable struggles which occur even in the most ideal setting. From these things alone could grow the infinite variety and color of human nature, the things which keep any two human beings from ever being psychologically identical.

What happens now when into these "normal" struggles of childhood and infancy are introduced violently disturbing and unusual forces, such as death, divorce, financial upheavals which alter either

the child's physical environment or the "atmosphere" of his home as the result of crises in his parents' lives? How do these thrusts from the external world affect such deeply internal and inevitable problems?

Here one must emphasize the striking difference between the reactions of adults and children, so as to avoid the fallacy of interpreting the child's response as too mature and adult. It is a psychiatric commonplace to recognize that adult patients use external difficulties as a way of escaping internal problems. In mental hospitals, even seriously disturbed patients generally become quiet and relatively normal while passing through a serious illness, or if they should chance to break a limb, or the like. The adult neurotic actually feels better when he has something tangible with which to grapple.

### *Seeing with the Child's Eyes*

WITH children one faces a very different problem. The child's grasp of reality is limited. He takes all of life on faith from adults, and he is dependent upon this faith in adults. That is why the child must make of the adults who are around him omniscient and omnipotent beings who are all-powerful and all-good. That is why the little boy who walks beside his father asks him to reach up to see if he can touch the sun.

And that is why the little boy says, "My father is bigger than yours, and my big brother can beat your big brother."

He must quiet his anxieties by making of the adults who surround him unshakeable fortresses against attack.

Beyond this lies the child's inability to know what is and what is not possible in life, his limited capacity to distinguish between reality and the magic of his phantasies. When terrifying things happen to the child, they seem to confirm his fantastic fears which are to him even a thousand times worse than the reality.

And what is more, his faith in adults is shaken. He feels betrayed. He becomes prematurely critical and abandons their guidance and their leadership before he has had the opportunity to incorporate into his own psychic mechanisms their ways and their standards of meeting life.

If now during this period of his development, when the conditions of life force him to struggle with the conflicts centering around his primitive bodily needs, he is simultaneously forced to suffer privation

or to meet the call for intrinsically difficult external adjustments—*this will never ease his emotional conflict as it may with an adult.* But instead it will drive him to the easy pleasures of phantasy or to direct infantile forms of bodily or genital gratification. If life itself becomes too disappointing or cruel, he may turn away from the external world and center his psychic energies upon himself. This results in a premature arrest of his intellectual and cultural development.

Thus we see that the child who feels that he lacks the approval of dependable adults whom he can love and on whose love he can count, or one whose fundamental bodily needs for adequate nourishment and care are neglected is driven toward a life of phantasy and of solitary, objectless bodily pleasure. Furthermore his anxieties are inflated, his angers overstimulated; and whatever conscience-like functions he possesses will operate with erratic swings between overseverity and indifference. For it is largely by a safe identification with loved adults that the child builds up a sound and stable conscience as a natural part of his own psychic organization.

### *Weighing Physical and Psychic Factors*

IT MAY be clarifying to list in a more or less tabular form the disturbing external forces which can play into the child's evolving personality. These fall into two major groups which may be called: first, the primitive physiological deprivations; and second, the primitive psychological deprivations.

(1) The obscure, but persisting physiological effects of malnutrition and disease may manifest themselves in chronic disturbances in the visceral organs, such as the nutritional disturbances of the gastro-intestinal functions in childhood. Or they may show up as failures in growth, or as susceptibility to infections. Out of all of these come complex secondary psychological drives, toward a collapse of energy, toward an increasing dependence upon phantasy and upon auto-erotic gratifications. At the same time the child's terror of illness and disease is enhanced, and with his inadequate grasp of reality and his inability to correct his phantasies through clear notions of what is possible and what is not possible, this terror may be vastly inflated. Furthermore these terrors are of a peculiarly significant kind, leading to lasting fears of mutilation and of disease which may exert crippling influences upon the child's emotional development.

(2) The primitive *psychological* deprivations center around the real or threatened loss of loved objects. These objects may be the people that the child loves and depends upon, or the inanimate things which come to represent home and security. Here again, terror and sorrow are instigated, and especially the devastating loss of the sense of security against all threatening objects. Thereby occurs a secondary intensification of other fears, especially when the legitimate defensive guardians, his parents, do not seem to him to offer their full support.

All of these deprivations, real or imaginary, lead in turn to anger; and in this connection it is important to recall that in childhood all anger is guilt-laden, with the result that the child's sense of guilt, with the secondary demand for punishment, tends to isolate him more and more from his kind.

Out of this constellation of forces, one sees the child driven back upon himself, cut off by terror, by fears of mutilation and disease, and by the fear of the loss of love; driven regressively deeper into auto-erotic phantasies, losing all objects on which to pour out

his own emotional interests, and turning it all back upon himself. This is the picture of the disruption of childhood by the play of external destructive forces upon the inevitable instinctual drama that is childhood's lot even under the most favored circumstances.

In the child's psychic life the reality of his existence is only one component; the other is the intricate and largely unconscious pattern of his primitive phantasies. To help him in his dealings with reality—whether this is the ordinary and commonplace reality of struggle in the normal family, or the dramatic and uncommon reality of some special crisis—one must help him disentangle the actual facts from the web of phantasy in which they become enmeshed.

The therapeutic problem and the preventive problem are really one, because the best preparation for the strains of the future is the healing of the past. For this, the child's fantastic terrors must be allayed, his sense of bitter and frustrated anger discharged, his confident love for some dependable adult continuously reaffirmed, and a healthy personal conscience built and rebuilt.

## Being Afraid

*Fear is a universal experience, but our fears differ. In deciding how to help a child master even "the common fears of childhood," it is necessary to take account of that particular child's temperament.*

RUTH BRICKNER, M.D., and JOSETTE FRANK

WE ALL want our children to be courageous; yet we want also to guard them against the hazards of their own fearlessness—at one moment we exhort Johnny to "be a man," while in the next breath we admonish him to "look out." How are we to achieve these two desired ends? Are courage and caution incompatible?

The answer lies, perhaps, in our concept of courage and our definition of fear. There is a kind of fear which anticipates with dread every unknown situation or sensation; there is another kind of fear which appreciates the real dangers of a given situation and motivates the individual to take steps to safeguard himself against these dangers. The first is paralyz-

ing; the second is that "better part of valor" which is necessary to survival. So also are there differences in courage: there is a kind of courage which is compounded of impulsiveness and ignorance of the risks involved; and there is another which consists of a mastery of self—an ability to face danger and conquer fear.

It is important for parents to realize that the individual child will react in different ways under different circumstances. But it is at least equally important to remember that there are significant differences between children which predispose one child to react to threatening situations in one way and another in a different way.

A mother strolled up and down the park walk, accompanied by her little daughter, a twenty-month-old toddler. The child wore a "pony-harness" over her coat, and trotted soberly a few feet in front as long as the reins were in her mother's hand. Presently, however, the mother stopped by a bench. Leaving the child standing at one end, she took her place on the farthest seat—a distance of hardly ten steps even for a toddler.

"Come on, dear," she called, "walk to mother."

The baby looked longingly at her mother, seemed to measure the intervening distance—and then promptly collapsed on the sidewalk.

"See that," exclaimed the mother, "she can walk perfectly well all by herself, but she *won't do it*. She has to think that I'm right there."

On a bench close by another mother was watching this performance with interest. Suddenly, however, she jumped up.

"There she goes," she cried, and was off in pursuit of her own two-year-old, who seemed a tiny, blue, fast-moving dot, as she disappeared behind a green hummock in the middle of the wide stretch of lawn.

As she came back breathless, the child tucked under her arm, she remarked to the other mother, "She's a born adventurer," and there was considerable exasperation mixed with her pride.

#### *Threat or Challenge?*

WHETHER the child looks upon the unfolding world and its demands as threats or as challenges is discernible at quite an early age. And though no one would minimize the importance of parental training and example, these individual differences often seem to occur regardless of what the parent does or says. We may assume, for instance, that the two mothers just described were not so very different in their ideas and attitudes toward "learning to walk alone." Yet each of the little girls exhibited a characteristic reaction—the one of timidity and the other of daring. As parents we have an obligation to keep every child as free as possible from hampering fears and anxieties; but we recognize, too, that the fulfilling of this obligation differs from one child to the next.

Up to the present our scientific knowledge brings us no nearer to an understanding of these basic differences than to attribute them to constitutional forces—to the type of physical organization with which the child is endowed. Perhaps one of the greatest excite-

ments associated with parenthood consists in the gradual revelation of these constitutionally determined characteristics of our children, their predisposition to accept their environmental experiences in their own unique fashion.

#### *Allowing for Individual Differences*

CHILDREN's responses to a sudden shock associated with some slight physical pain offer a dramatic illustration of this variation. By the time they reach school age many children have become moderately "good sports" about the ordinary casualties of rough and tumble play. A few may be almost stoics, but some will still go to the other extreme. One little girl of six, whenever she fell down while running, would burst into howls and refuse to right herself. Though her mother called to her reassuringly, she could not gain the necessary inner control to get up and go to her mother for comfort. The physical shock and pain terrified her and roused her anger almost simultaneously. She appeared to demand comfort from her mother at the same time that she held her responsible for the shock she had suffered. Her insistence that her mother *come to her* and pick her up appeared to serve her double need for solace and for retaliation. This child had from the beginning evidenced cautiousness about all physical activity. Her threshold to pain, particularly in association with a sudden shock, seemed to be very low, and once it was traversed, such a flood of terror and anger was let loose that it was no wonder she tried by excessive caution to protect herself.

In the same way, some children are more highly sensitive to noise, to sudden occurrences, to the challenge of the unfamiliar. Watch any group of children in their first days of nursery school. To some each new situation—the slide, the steps, the swing, the jungle-gym—is a threat which is regarded with suspicion, doubt, or even hostility. To others, these things are a challenge; they rush forth eagerly to meet the new—investigating, sampling, trying out everything in sight.

The fact that there are these inherent (some would say they are inherited) differences in the way children react to various situations does not mean that parents are helpless or that training is of no value. Indeed, it only serves to intensify the parents' responsibility—it is not just an objective question of "what is best," but the very subtle question of what is best for this particular child.

There are, however, certain fears which seem to be rather common to all, or nearly all, children. And if we know what may be the causes and possible ways of helping children in general meet these situations, we are the better prepared to help our own child.

### *"Scared of the Dark"*

PERHAPS the commonest childhood fear is that of the dark. Modern parents are often surprised when manifestations of this primitive fear appear. For have they not painstakingly avoided making use of the dark for any disciplinary purpose? Have they not made "lights out time" a period of quiet and serenity? Why then should their children fear the dark? There remains, however, the fact that, though the child at bedtime is seemingly at peace with himself and the world, he is, when all is said and done, left alone. And, should he not fall asleep at once, he may feel increasingly isolated. Because it is dark, his attention cannot be distracted by the familiar objects in the room and his many associations with them; he is forced relentlessly to keep company with his own uncensored, unrelieved thoughts and feelings. The room is peopled by the promptings of his own imagery. It is the common experience of adults that, alone and wakeful in the dark of night, even they magnify their difficulties and lose their sense of proportion. What is more natural than that children, who have so few resources and so little experience in finding solutions of their problems, conscious and unconscious, should react even more acutely?

Yet we do want our children, sooner or later, to be able to face the dark alone and unafraid. How to achieve this? The Spartan mother simply closes the door and trusts to the power of experience oft repeated—"He will get used to it in time." Sometimes it is the father who is determined to make his offspring "brave," and who forces the reluctant child to go again and again into a dreaded room or dark passage until he "gets over that nonsense." If the child demurs, he may even be branded a "coward."

If he goes—which means usually that he fears that ignominious branding worse than he fears the dark—he may eventually learn that no real dangers lurk; but we do not know what price in real anguish he pays for this discovery. Nor has he necessarily developed courage by this gesture. Perhaps he has only substituted one fear for another—the fear of ridicule or contempt and of parental disapprobation, for his

childish fear of the dark. One may well question whether this is not substituting a greater for a lesser ill. Unless something out of the ordinary has occurred to exaggerate it, most children get over their fear of the dark in their own good time; but a child who has once come to fear the opinion of other people, particularly of those he loves, carries a load of insecurity which may affect his attitudes throughout life. Courage as an abstract idea can have little meaning to the young child. It has value only by virtue of adult approval, adult emphasis. As with other learning, we shall help the child to develop this kind of stamina more by celebrating his successes than by confronting him with his failures.

Ignorance and strangeness have ever been potent sources of fear. Familiar things often prove harmless and, if they do, lose their power of invoking unreasoning terrors. A reassuring glimmer of light, the friendly presence of an adult to point out familiar landmarks, a comfortable chat or story to bridge the gap from human contact to the night's isolation—these will usually prove sufficiently reassuring to the child who fears the dark.

### *Familiar Fears*

CERTAIN other fears of childhood are common, though by no means universal. Many young children, for example, begin by being afraid of the water but learn with experience and growing mastery to enjoy it. Yet here again there are wide individual differences—some hardly more than babies will venture in with no regard for possibly impending waves; others never lose their dread, no matter what is done to help them. Indeed, the whole question of why the same situation spells terror to one individual and the reverse to another is a baffling one.

Meantime, there is no denying that water is a very real threat—and a wholesome respect for it is surely to be desired, at least until one has learned to cope with its dangers. Here again we are in conflict; we were chagrined when our three-year-old shrieked with fear at the water's edge; but now that he is five and grown more venturesome we go through agonies of dread lest he be tempted to investigate the waters of a nearby pool. How shall we reconcile this conflict between the need for courage and the need for caution? With most children we may probably count upon familiarity and mastery to dissipate fear—always provided the child is not subjected to parental fears and anxieties. Expose a child to water

often enough, long enough, in reassuring company, and under safeguards sufficient to give him a sense of mastery, and as a general rule his fear gradually gives way to pleasure in a new-found skill. One child comes to it sooner than another perhaps, but few indeed are the children who do not, with patient and tempered instruction, learn to swim—and like it. Side by side with this will go the teaching of caution, which, unlike fear, is a reasoned process. Caution is a thoughtful unemotional measuring of the extent of the danger against one's own capacity and equipment for meeting it. It need have no accompanying anxieties.

Another fear that strikes at the very roots of the child's security is the fear of being "lost." Can anything be more heartrending than the sight of a little child who finds himself suddenly alone in a crowd of strange faces—separated perhaps only a few paces from his mother, but failing to find her, as expected, by his side? His whole world has collapsed! Strangely enough, a not unusual adult response to this kind of fear is either ridicule, or, if the adult has also been momentarily frightened, anger. Neither of these responses is likely to be helpful in re-establishing the child's confidence in the security of his world. Whatever our own anxieties in such a situation, it might be more reassuring to the child (if he is old enough to understand) to explain to him how safe he really *was* in the midst of all those strangers—how the community safeguards children in just such emergencies, and how and where he may find such help if ever he needs it.

#### *Learning to Accept the Inevitable*

FOR many children even a visit to the doctor may inspire deep and sometimes hysterical fear. None of us likes being hurt, yet this is a fear which most of us have learned to face. Perhaps it is the very inevitableness of the doctor's ministrations or the dentist's, that has led us to accept the necessity for the pain at least with fortitude, the handmaid of courage. Taking our cue from this, we often find that we can help our children to accept this inevitability too, if we ourselves have truly accepted it.

In contrast to this attitude we occasionally see a child who seems constantly anxious about himself, about which foods he should eat, about every slight bruise or cut—not so much because of the present pain as because of the dire possibilities which may result. One is likely to find him an inherently

timid child who identifies himself with an apprehensive parent, taking over the parent's similar anxieties. When such fears are excessive—as for instance, when fear of being contaminated by dirt or germs is associated with compulsive washing and changing of clothes—it is symptomatic of a more serious emotional disturbance which would need more intensive discussion than is possible here.

#### *Camouflaging Deeper Difficulties*

WHEN children's fears overstep the bounds of the "natural" and "normal," it is likely that they are only a cloak for deeper uncertainties and insecurities. It is, of course, common wisdom to protect our children from unassimilable terrifying experiences. Dr. Jersild, of Teachers College, in a study of children's fears, gives statistical corroboration of this wisdom. He concludes that:

"Many children from relatively uncultured homes carry a large burden of unnecessary fear. . . . The effects of moving pictures, of deliberate attempts by older persons to frighten the child, the effect of radio stories, of sensational newspaper accounts, and of tales that pass from hand to mouth, as contrasted with first-hand experience with terrifying conditions, appeared to be a chief factor in determining the content of the fears of the public school children."

But children in thoroughly wholesome environments also pass through phases during which they evidence fears and terrors which seem quite unrelated to their actual experiences. These have their sources in conflicts going on within the child himself and are often not consciously understood. Among these is the fear of one's own avenging conscience.

A little girl of four, who lived in a household which included a very domesticated dog, began to express fear of an imaginary dog—a dog that might chase and snap at her. She would walk to her parents' room at night through the dark hall to be reassured that the bad dog would not pounce on her through the bedroom window.

Two brothers, fifteen months and eight years old, completed the group of family children. Little Martha, the four-year-old, had assumed a very maternal and protective attitude toward the baby. She was indulgent when he scattered her toys about and helped her mother most conscientiously in caring for him. During the period of her fear of the bad dog,

she occupied herself a great deal with doll play and always she was the very solicitous, conscientious, and at times, almost querulous mother. Open jealousy of the baby brother she never showed; she had rather a too mature acceptance of him. The standard of conduct and attitude toward him which she demanded of herself was so high that it did not allow for any natural expression of animosity. That the animosity was there seemed certain, but because of the child's too early matured conscience, it was not permitted expression. Her resentment at the brother was felt by the child to be a wicked, vicious impulse, for which there would only be punishment for her. The fierce dog was probably a symbolic expression of this "avenging conscience" within herself. The child's attempt to escape from the impasse in which she believed herself to be revealed itself in her play through her ever more dutiful care of her dolls and brother.

### *Where Appearances Are Deceiving*

HER mother, who at first regarded her behavior as too good to be true, became convinced that it might have been achieved at too high a price. She began to call on Martha less often to help with the care of the brother. She expressed to her in indirect ways—through stories, through doll play with her—her recognition of the natural impulses of jealousy and resentment felt by an older child for a younger one. The day came when Martha, who was to have a birthday party, was asked by an older friend whether her baby brother would be one of the guests.

"He's no guest," said Martha contemptuously, "he's a pest!"

This marked the beginning of a more open expression of her mixed feelings for her brother. She spoke slightly of him and was less overgenerous with her toys and less concerned about his care. Although this was at first accompanied by some exaggeration of her dog fear, a rapid diminution soon followed, so that six months later it had disappeared. Meantime she had come to a sort of impersonal toleration for the baby, which was perhaps a sounder foundation for future friendship between this brother and sister than her earlier oversolicitude.

The occasions when a child becomes flooded by his own aggressively destructive primitive impulses bring a special kind of apprehension and protest. The mother of a seven-year-old boy returned home late one evening to find her son still wide awake, agitated

and fearful. He burst forth with a story of a fight that had taken place at school. One of the boys, the "pest" of the class, had thrown someone's hat over the wall. This had led to a group attack on him—six boys against one. The seven-year-old had been in the thick of it.

"I kicked and punched him," he boasted, and then added hastily, "Miss S. (the assistant teacher) said it was fair because he always bothers us." Then he burst out angrily and on the verge of tears, "But she should have stopped us! She shouldn't have let us do it!"

On investigation it was found that the assistant had sanctioned the fight and allowed it to continue for three-quarters of an hour, on the grounds that the annoying boy needed to feel the group censure. Judged from the effect on at least one of the attacking boys, the fight had gone on far too long. One could, with justification, suspect that this young teacher had unwittingly exploited the righteous indignation of the boys in order to give vicarious vent to her own hostility to the "pest." Given free rein to be as brutal as he wished, the seven-year-old was left shaken with his own unleashed aggression.

The child's crying need to be protected against himself was voiced in his protest, "She shouldn't have let us do it!"

### *Taking the Long View*

CHILDREN may be as disturbed and even terrified by what they encounter within themselves as by what they encounter in the outside world. They may need to be saved from their own aggressive impulses which run counter to the dictates of their own conscience.

If children's fears are a mark of their weaknesses, they may also, at times, be a register of their strength. Parents may often find in these fear expressions indexes of their children's inner conflicts and guides to their developmental needs. In our straining toward standards of courage we are all too likely to lose sight of more important aspects of these childish strifes. As parents we must see courage not as an end in itself but rather as a by-product of growth and of capacity to deal with life effectively. As our children grow in knowledge and understanding, as they find themselves more and more equipped to meet the ordinary encounters of their day-to-day living, they will grow too in security and self-confidence, which are the very roots of courage.

# What Shall We Tell the Children?

*Though it is often hard enough to teach children to be self-reliant in the face of physical dangers, it is still more difficult to instil in them the kind of fortitude that can withstand the subtler threats of life.*

JEAN SCHICK GROSSMAN

CHILDREN'S expressions of fear are often the remembered vocabulary of their parents. I can still hear his mother's words coming from the lips of Adolph, my childhood hero, who accompanied me to the park but couldn't skate.

It was with an air of proud finality that he said, "I'd like to skate, but I can't—I'm *nervous*."

I recall, too, hearing his mother and his grandmother admonishing him in the tones of voice he unconsciously reproduced so accurately. And I have since heard many echoes of them, passing on the fears of anxious parents to their children:

"How can Bob expect me to let him ride a bicycle? Only the other day his own cousin broke his leg on one!"

"I just couldn't send my children to camp—I'd die a thousand deaths all summer!"

"Roughnecks—that's all there are in this neighborhood! I've forbidden my youngsters to go down to play on the street. They'd be sure to come up with bloody noses or torn clothes."

"I don't care if all her classmates *do* go to school alone. Until she's ten I'm going to take her myself; traffic scares *me*, and I'm a lot older than she is!"

There are so many risks involved in living. From birth—and even before—our children are faced with real hazards which may threaten their physical well-being. It goes without saying that young children must not be exposed to hazardous situations which they are not ready to face, such as unguarded windows, easily accessible gas stoves, unsupervised play streets. In the beginning this is wholly an adult responsibility; and it is one that can be met better by an attitude of unemotional caution, than by one of continuous anxiety.

But in our efforts to protect children there is always another kind of risk—that of depriving our

growing sons and daughters of the opportunity to *live* by our very zeal. With growth in understanding and maturity children must learn gradually to assume more and more responsibility for their own safety. They must acquire intelligent resourcefulness, so that as they are forced to meet the day-to-day dangers of life they may learn to differentiate between fear and caution, between foolhardiness and courage.

They must also gradually learn to differentiate between real and imaginary fears, though at best this will be a slow growth. (How many grown-ups can say that they have outgrown all the terrors of imagination?) Before we can decide "what to tell" we must know whether the individual child's problem arises from the impact of an outside event or demand, from some transient need or desire, or from some more deep-seated difficulty within the personality.

The problem of how to help children learn to face a specific danger or fear—either real or imagined—is as old as life itself, and perhaps as insoluble. At any rate, it is one which we "modern" parents share with all our predecessors back to the first cave- or tree-dwelling family.

But every age has also its characteristic fears; and those of our own time often seem particularly difficult to deal with because they are likely to take the form of vague but pervasive anxieties. We probably do not encounter the immediate terror effect of "hair standing on end" as often as our early ancestors, but we and our children are becoming more and more familiar with the vacant stare and the nagging constraint around the heart, as confidence ebbs. In addition to physical hazards, both actual and imagined, modern life has introduced our children to a great variety of specters, through such media as the daily newspaper, the

radio, the movie. Our eyes and ears are constantly being bombarded by the strange, the bizarre, the cruel, the perverted, the grotesque. Less dramatic, but more subtly threatening to children, is their gradual introduction to our whole social scene—the economic dangers that surround us and the grave anxieties on all sides because of present hazards and future uncertainties. Traffic dangers, kidnaping, bank closings, strikes and unemployment, racial discrimination, threats of war—these loom all too imminent. The wolf-at-the-door may be only a figure of speech; but it is more genuine and more terrifying than the traditional "bear" of James-Lange psychological theory.

We seem to have need of different responses with which to meet these unlike fears. *Courage*—the physical stamina to withstand the grosser onslaughts of life—may help us to behave effectively when external forces, such as lightning, animals, fire, and disease threaten. But we seek some other quality—*spiritual fortitude* may describe it—with which to arm ourselves against that other kind of dread which comes from such causes as being out of a job, foreclosure of a home, going to a hospital for a serious operation, the death of a beloved one.

#### *Learning to "Take It"*

Now, as always, there are situations where the first kind of courage—a level-headed self-control—is all important. Fear may become hysteria, more dangerous than the danger itself. Examples are obvious—fire in a theatre, a sinking ship, an accident. How can anyone teach a child to be cool-headed in time of peril, to attain the necessary courage to meet emergencies? In this, as in so many other things, nothing is more instructive than the example of the adult. How his parents meet emergencies, even the comparatively trivial accidents that happen to their children, leaves its imprint on the child's own reactions.

The very powerful influence of the prevailing *mores* may also help to build up courage if it is applied judiciously. In the movies and in much of our current literature the simple test of the American hero is epitomized in the questions—"Can he take it?" or "Is he yellow?" There is no doubt that the capacity "to take it" is in many ways a great moral accomplishment and may often be used as a desirable standard. One recognizes

ancient Sparta and the Stoic spirit in these American idioms. How stirring the thought of a Joan of Arc bravely going to the stake, a Socrates calmly drinking his cup of hemlock! We sense here spiritual conquests of a very high order.

#### *Counting the Cost of Bravery*

To stand "with head bloody but unbowed" is nobler than to cringe; but as parents we recognize too that we must be careful not to put too great a strain upon heroism of this kind. What shall we say to the nine-year-old boy living in a congested New York City tenement house neighborhood, in mortal terror of the "next block gang" that is ready to search his pockets and beat him up whenever he finds it necessary to trespass on their territory? Or to the girl of ten, terrified by a conditioned fear of the water, whose brother throws her in unexpectedly with the taunt, "We'll have no cowards in this family"?

In *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, Jane Addams writes, "I remember with a lump in my throat the Bohemian boy of thirteen who committed suicide because he could not 'make good' in school and wished to show that he too had 'the stuff' in him, as stated in the piteous little letter he left behind."

Is it our desire that our children should *always* "take it?" Certain demands may be unfair, unreasonable, and unjust. They may fail to take into account the child's readiness for the particular experience, his true motivations or real feelings, the possibility of harm to his personality, of affront to his sense of right, and of grave risk to his basic security.

If we are to safeguard the child's basic security, we must somehow have achieved for ourselves that second kind of courage, the "spiritual fortitude" which is perhaps our only bulwark against "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." This subtler strength is that for which today we have most need—and least foundation. For many the consolations of "religious resignation" have become almost as meaningless as the savage's fatalistic acceptance of magic and the supernatural. We are left with only ourselves to depend upon. But it is also true—and this many of us have rediscovered for ourselves, especially during these recent years of upheaval—that the human spirit does rise to meet an emergency. If the emergency is one in which we must protect not only ourselves but our children, it not infrequently calls forth an undreamed of inner poise.

Mrs. Brown told her story at a settlement house mothers' study group. One day when things just couldn't look any gloomier (her husband had had no luck at job hunting and many unpaid bills had accumulated), an employe of the Gas Company arrived and proceeded to shut off the gas. The twins, aged four, were fascinated and looked on in rapt attention, but only until eight-year-old Mary came home from school for lunch. This older child was at once able to size up the situation. She flung down her books, ran over to her mother, and burst into tears. The twins, sensing tragedy, clutched the mother's dress and joined in the terrified weeping.

"Right then and there I made up my mind. I wasn't going to let things get us," said Mrs. Brown.

She explained to the children that their father had gone to get help from the city agency—there were people who took care of families when fathers could not find work. She told them that the evening's dinner had been cooked and that she was quite certain the gas would be turned on again next morning. She soon succeeded in quieting them, in reestablishing their confidence, and in offsetting the anxiety and dread which had descended upon them. Thus her children could find solace in the preciousness of home as a haven of security, through the presence of parents who were ready to do everything possible to guard and protect them; and in addition they were fortified by the reassurance that even in a world that can seem so unfriendly there are people who stand ready and prepared to aid.

### *The Fear of Fear*

IF anxieties were limited to those who, like Mrs. Brown, have immediate cause, they might still be legion, but they would not be so nearly universal as they seem to be today. In a complex and hostile world, where mass issues, only vaguely sensed, may suddenly strike any man down, the weary parent fears not only the actualities of the present but even more the possibilities of the future. We are terribly afraid that in our hour of trial we shall be found wanting. It is this "fear of fear" which makes us ask so anxiously and so repeatedly even before any blow has fallen, "What shall we tell the children?"

How can we tell them about the surrounding hatreds, about the dangers to their physical, economic, and social security? How can we inform them of the darkly veiled future without placing an impossible

burden of dread upon their young shoulders? The very asking of these so timely questions creates in us, as parents, a feeling of apprehension.

Mrs. Lake's daughter was a student at a woman's college. At the beginning of the girl's sophomore year Mrs. Lake secretly visited the Dean and confided that the family had met with serious financial reverses. Sally would not be able to stay at college beyond the year.

"But I tell you all this in strictest confidence," explained Mrs. Lake. "Sally mustn't know. Her father and I can't bear to tell her. We want her to enjoy this year without knowing what we are sacrificing to keep her here. We must shelter her while we can. She'll have plenty to worry her soon enough."

### *Parents as Interpreters*

MANY of us would feel that the security Mrs. Lake sought for her daughter was fundamentally insecurity. How much this girl would have gained in understanding, in resourcefulness, had she not only been allowed to share her family's true fortunes but had she also been encouraged to contribute her own thinking, planning, and feeling to the work of reconstruction for the family's future!

Out of a very different environment another mother came to a neighborhood house study group asking for help in a strange dilemma. Her son John, aged eight, received an allowance of twenty-five cents a week to do with as he pleased. But—and this was the mother's expressed problem—he refused to spend a cent of it—ever! He was just "too figurin' out," his mother reported. By way of illustration, she went on to say that the boy loved to read the funnies and told how he searched through garbage and refuse cans and wandered from house to house seeking stray newspapers week-days and Sundays without end.

"Use your allowance money, or if you don't want to do that, I'll give you the extra pennies," the much embarrassed mother had urged.

"Oh, no," protested John, "some day we might need those pennies—for bread!"

"What could have made the boy so scared?" asked another group member.

John's mother readily elaborated, describing some of the hardships the family had endured during the previous year when the father had been unemployed. At that time she had felt that she must impress the boy with the great need for careful economy and had

wanted him to have a deep sense of the family's difficulties. How had she tried to do this? She recalled one very dramatic scene which had greatly impressed her son.

"Look in my pocketbook!" she had exclaimed. "Only three pennies left. And here you are asking me for money for a ball when what we need is money for bread!"

Comedy-relief was injected into the meeting at this point when another mother burst forth with, "My Bill's nothin' like that. When I begin to talk about our troubles, all I hear from him is, 'There's ma—broadcastin' again!'"

We can readily recognize that different children will have to be helped in different ways to share in family problems. Important, too, is the consideration of a given child's age and general maturity. It would probably be safe to say that a child should be given as much information about the facts of his environment as he is capable of understanding—as an individual, as a growing and developing personality, but not in such ways or at such a pace as to threaten his fundamental security, or at the risk of his becoming bewildered and over-burdened beyond his strength and beyond his ability to understand or to do anything about his situation.

It may prove comforting to remember, too, that

children seem to possess the gift of not understanding or sharing many of our grown-up fear concepts. When disaster does not actually affect them, many children have rather limited powers of imaginative sympathy and a rather different moral sense from ours. A mother had the experience recently of bringing home from the hospital a young son of nine who had completely recovered from a dreaded illness. After a few days in his own bed he became visibly impressed by the frequent telephone calls, gifts, and messages, and by the visitors who eyed him in evident relief at his recovery.

"Gosh, were you *really* worried about me?" he asked his mother in obvious surprise.

She was startled and also somewhat gratified by her son's remark; for it seemed to indicate that despite her own anguish and panic, the emergency had called forth unsuspected reserves of strength that had carried over to the child.

The fear of death—and who of us has grown to maturity without having known it?—is the supreme test of this spiritual fortitude. To the child, as to the adult, it may be endured or may be past endurance; and the emotions it arouses in the child will be colored very largely by the attitudes and behavior of the grown-ups in his world. There may be uncer-

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## Adolescent Anxieties

*It is no wonder that the 'teens are often a prey to worry and doubt; but if childhood has been a relatively happy and constructive time, these anxieties are not likely to be too devastating or prolonged.*

AUGUSTA BRONNER

IS ADOLESCENCE a period particularly characterized by fears and anxieties? Yes and no. At the 'teens age individuals differ enormously one from the other; and, though it is trite, it cannot be too often reiterated that many young people pass through adolescence unaware of any physical or emotional change. Not every adolescent is beset by anxieties; there is at this stage of growth no inherent necessity of developing fears. Whether

or not anxieties occur, how severe they may be, how they are met, depend more largely perhaps on upbringing and experiences of earlier years than upon any other factor. In spite of this, there are certain anxieties frequent enough during the 'teens years to be worthy of consideration as special problems of this period of development.

That some anxieties are likely to occur to the young individual who is breaking away from child-

hood and is not yet grown to adult stature seems comprehensible. It is not for everyone an easy matter merely to grow up, some find it so fraught with difficulties that even acute anxiety may accompany the process. Since growing up involves primarily a changed relationship to parents, it is about this changing relationship that one group of fears and anxieties appear. Primarily these revolve about the problems of emancipation. There are some adolescents who have a generalized fear of relinquishing the characteristics of childhood, who cling tenaciously to childish patterns of behavior, and who exhibit by various symptoms a very genuine fear of developing toward increasing adulthood. The overprotected boy or girl, strongly attached to parents and home, finding a large measure of security and satisfaction in very dependent relationships to one or both parents, may only with difficulty become emancipated and give up these more childish pleasures for the untried satisfactions of independence.

#### *Adult Fears on Young Shoulders*

IT GOES without saying that this adolescent type of fear of accepting increasing responsibility for self-direction is very largely conditioned by relationships between parent and child established long before adolescence. The child with a strong fixation on the parent frequently finds himself at adolescence troubled by the difficult experience of freeing himself. More often fear is not dependent upon the child alone, but is as much a projection of the fear of the parent as of the adolescent's inherent anxiety. Those parents who find it difficult to give up their children emotionally communicate their fears to the adolescent; he either completely absorbs them into his own personality, or he more or less unconsciously adopts them as his own, because he cannot bear to hurt the parent through asserting his independence. This, he senses, would deprive his parents of one of their deepest satisfactions.

Sometimes this fear of growing up is a very definite passing on to the younger generation of an attitude toward life which the parent has carried over from his or her own early unfortunate upbringing. It may be, for example, a definite reaction to the parents' own sexual incompatibilities or marital disharmonies which make the mother, let us say, fear evidences in her children of interests in the opposite sex, even when she knows that such interest is altogether normal, and never more so than during adolescence.

Sometimes the urge to maintain dependence and retain the privileges of childhood is at war with equally insistent desires to break away from these bonds and to stand more and more on one's own feet. The pull in the two opposite directions may lead to conflicts that exhibit themselves in devious ways—in seeming uncertainties and vacillation, in irritability and mood swings, in sudden flashes of independence, in ambivalent attitudes toward the family.

#### *When "Appearances" Are All-Important*

ANOTHER group of very common anxieties concerns itself not with the young person's relationship to the parents, but with his notions of himself—anxieties that might properly be called narcissistic. Often because of inadequate information or because of peculiar attitudes built up earlier, the young adolescent becomes terribly concerned lest he may be different from others of his age group. In the desire to be like others, normally one of the strongest adolescent urges, the adolescent boy or girl appraises himself or herself, fearful lest he may somehow be found lacking. Sometimes this concern is focused on physical prowess or appearance, sometimes on mental or social adequacy.

Adolescent girls very frequently wonder whether the changes taking place in their body contours are strikingly different from what is normal. Some have told me, either during the adolescent period or later, of intense—and until then hidden—anxiety for fear such changes might be abnormal. Who does not know of the misery felt and often expressed by the girl who at this age puts on weight at a greatly increased rate? In the clinic one tends to see exaggerated cases, but doubtless they are representative of problems common enough in lesser degree. In our experience we have known more than a fair share of instances of actual emaciation due to voluntary starvation; such ill-advised "dieting" is an overt expression of anxiety keen enough to lead to self-deprivation of the very fundamental pleasure of eating.

Among adolescent boys similar anxieties center more often about under-development or retarded development which causes fear of being regarded as infantile or effeminate or somehow lacking in normal masculine virility. It is not always easy to obtain frank, spontaneous expression of such anxieties. Frequently, however, they can be readily discovered through the phantasy-life, in which the adolescent

boy finds satisfaction in picturing himself as a very adequate young male, often the hero in this self-created drama.

Physical normality and attractiveness loom larger as desirable qualities at this than at any other time of life. The younger child is usually unconcerned about such matters and has little standard of physical attractiveness. Later in life values alter; other things take on prime significance. But at adolescence, when acceptance by one's own age group is of vital concern, when the desire for social success and popularity is strong, fear of social failure is often conditioned by notions about one's appearance. It is for this reason that thought must be given to physical matters, which from the point of view of health may seem negligible; and every effort should be made to meet the adolescent's justified interest in himself, whether this involves superficialities such as beauty shops or intricacies such as endocrinology.

Feelings of inferiority, so likely now to appear or to be exaggerated, may center also about physical skills or intellectual status. With the presentday emphasis on athletics, awkwardness or ineptness or physical handicaps become special obstacles to social success. The fear that one is conspicuously deficient and hence disliked may assume important proportions.

#### *High Hurdles—School and Vocation*

IN high school there are also a multitude of problems concerned with educational adjustments which may create anxieties. Fear of disappointing parents who have set their hearts on a certain course of study or career for their children is probably most common. More rarely the adolescent has of his own accord developed a special interest and goal which he finds difficult to achieve; in the struggle to meet standards set for himself by himself he may develop anxiety. But this is much less common than the needlessly disturbing situation which thoughtless or unintelligent parents unintentionally create.

Even wise guidance cannot always prevent the anxieties and heartaches of the adolescent who thinks other people find him too "dumb" or uninteresting (sometimes even too bright or serious minded) to be capable of the "small talk" or chatter that makes for social success. In and of itself such social success may seem relatively unimportant; but when anxieties reveal themselves in excessive shyness, withdrawal, seclusiveness, and a strong feeling of inability to

make normal friendships even when these are greatly desired, it assumes a very real importance.

The matter of educational and vocational steering takes on added seriousness in these days when economic dependence is at best likely to be chafingly long, and when an already crowded industrial world does not welcome new recruits. If discouragement is likely to be in store even for the well-trained, how much more for the misfit? It therefore becomes increasingly necessary to find educational training that will promise the largest measure of successful achievement, as well as give satisfactions in the learning. With economic stress in the family, anxiety about the future in the world of work is a problem not easy of solution these days. Recreational projects as a substitute for work or apprenticeship training do not seem satisfactory means of allaying discouragement and fear.

#### *Sex Problems of Adolescence*

THE most wide-spread source of adolescent anxiety we have left until the last. It is likely that in no one sphere or phase of life do as many acute conflicts and disturbances arise for young people as in the sexual sphere. Sometimes these fears and worries are very directly sexual, sometimes indirectly. Sometimes they are related to sexual stress and practices, sometimes entirely to ideas and phantasies.

Much has been written in recent years about the psycho-sexual development of the child and about the normal characteristics of adolescence. Yet clinical experience indicates that many young people, both boys and girls, still suffer anxieties because of ignorance, and many more because of the revival or persistence of earlier difficulties not well met. Some of the problems of emancipation are in reality sexual; some of those centering about fears of physical abnormality hark back to memories of former sexual habits. Feelings of guilt, early engendered and now reawakened, become the crux of conflicts in adolescence more often than one likes to acknowledge.

What can the intelligent parent do to prevent these fears and anxieties of adolescence? They vary so greatly with the individual case that specific modes of meeting them can hardly be given. But a general rule can perhaps be stated: Here, as in all matters concerning adolescence, begin long before adolescence arrives; guide, rather than force; be an intelligent observer of the child; anticipate and try to prevent, rather than wait and attempt to cure.

# Parents' Questions and Discussion

*These discussions, selected because of their interest in connection with the topic of this issue, are presented for the use of individuals and of study groups.*

STUDY GROUP DEPARTMENT  
CÉCILE PILPEL, Director—JOSETTE FRANK, Editor

*Is it desirable to send a two-and-a-half-year-old child to nursery school when he seems to dread going, clings to me pathetically when I attempt to leave him there, and sits disconsolately by himself after I have gone? The teachers feel that he will get used to it and that he should learn to adjust. He is so young that I cannot help being doubtful whether the whole plan is a wise one.*

I believe your best course would be to proceed very experimentally and see whether this adjustment does take place. It is true that many children—even very young ones—after going through a stormy and difficult period, learn to accept the nursery school happily and get much from the experience. But we must realize that others are not yet ready, while they are still so nearly babies, to make the break from their homes and mothers. If you become convinced that the strain is really too great, it may be that by waiting another six months or a year, such a break will be relatively easy. The fact that nursery schools offer so much that is beneficial to young children must not blind us to the necessity here, as in every other provision, of considering not only what is good in itself but also what is good for the individual child.

*Lately my little boy of four, who has never been especially fearful, has begun to show fears that I cannot account for. Although he has never objected to having his door closed at night, he now cries to have it open—says he is afraid of "burglars, of lions and tigers coming to eat him up." When we are in crowded places together he clings to me and seems terrified that I am going to disappear. I have been with him so constantly lately that I am*

*almost certain that nothing special has happened to frighten him.*

It is hard to explain the often observed fact that "fears," sometimes mild, sometimes acute, seem to be a common phase of childhood around this age. Often, too, as you have described, they make their appearance in children who have seemed quite serene when younger. If a child seems much more secure and comforted with his door open, a light in the hall or a flashlight under his pillow, there is no real reason why he should not have them. In six months, a year, or two years, he may be willing to give these up, with no more stress and strain than he feels without them now. Children's fears are real and cause suffering. A child who is frightened needs the comforting love and reassurance of mother or nurse. He should learn to look forward to a time when he is "big enough to be brave," but need not be ashamed if that time is not yet.

The psychoanalytic thought in this matter is that children around these ages are troubled by sexual curiosity and perplexities and by a growing conscience which makes them condemn these thoughts as "bad." They believe that if they are bad, they will inevitably be punished; and therefore they begin to people the night with wild animals or people bent on destroying them. It is worthwhile answering children's questions about differences in anatomy, where the baby comes from, and so on quite frankly, and seeing to it that nobody makes them believe that handling the genitals is dangerous or punishable. These measures may help the child, though often the problem is too complex to be reached by a layman.

This phase seems to be one of the "normal neuroses" of childhood. But most children outgrow it

—at least in its acute forms—around the age of six or seven or earlier.

*I am puzzled as to how much warning I should give my children of the real dangers which exist in the world around them. They have always been so trusting of strangers—so free from "fears"—that I am loath to spoil this attitude by injecting doubts. Yet I do feel troubled when I see my six-year-old making friends with a stranger on the block. I am apprehensive when my ten-year-old and his friends play ball on a lot near the railroad tracks and sometimes hang around the train yards. Would it be advisable to let them know that there are such things as kidnappers, or to try to dampen my boy's ardor for railroad mechanics by thoughts of accidents?*

A child who feels genuinely secure and friendly toward the world rarely has "fears" put into him by offering him rational explanations and warnings, any more than the fearful child can be talked out of his anxieties. I do not believe that your children will be harmed by a fairly realistic presentation of facts if you make it in a straightforward, unemotional manner.

To the six-year-old you might perhaps say, "Not everyone we meet in the world is good. There are some who may do us harm, even if they seem good and act friendly. It is better for children never to stop long to talk to strangers. If you wish to be outdoors alone, this is something you must learn." If there are specific inquiries, you might add, "Yes, once in a great while there are kidnappers; but you need not be afraid because you are so safe in your room at night, and anyway they are not interested in just 'plain folks' like us."

Wait for the child's questions. If he still seems troubled, encourage him to talk, show him he can be sure of safety and assure him that you and his father can protect him. If he sees that you are not anxious, it is not likely that he will be.

The boys who play around the tracks need more detailed instruction, and at this age it is better if it comes from their father, since anything the mother says is likely to be sniffed at as "sissy." Perhaps the father will take part in their games one day, investigate what the dangers really are, talk with them about trains, get the boys themselves to describe what they think might be dangerous, and see if they will voluntarily impose their own restrictions. Effort should be directed toward finding, if possible, what one may do in safety and *how* these things may be

done, rather than toward indiscriminate and wholesale forbidding. If the latter is necessary, the boys should understand why; and other measures should be taken to find suitable expressions for these interests.

*How can I prevent a seven-year-old from "listening in" to blood-and-thunder radio programs which leave him overexcited? His sister, aged ten, is undisturbed by them, but the little boy invariably lies awake or has "bad dreams" the nights after he has listened. Should I attempt to forbid it for both children? From a practical point of view it seems almost impossible to control.*

If you are convinced that there is no other alternative (as, for instance, letting the older child go to a neighbor's to listen with a playmate his own age), and that the younger child's trouble is real and cannot be mitigated by simple reassurances or jokes, there is no reason why you cannot insist that this program be eliminated. You can explain your point of view to the ten-year-old, pointing out that you sympathize with her disappointment and wish there were some way of managing without depriving her of this pleasure. Try to arrange another activity for that time of day, which both the children, but particularly the older one, will enjoy—a game, reading, "dressing up," or what not. The responsibility for making the best of the situation is yours, not the children's. Be present both to see that the radio is left off no matter what storms ensue, and also to offer as pleasant a substitute as your ingenuity can devise. But even "modern" parents will need to realize that there are occasions which require a well placed "no."

*My boy of nine, though strong and healthy, has always shown a certain physical timidity in the face of rough play with other youngsters his age. For instance, he shrinks away from a ball thrown to him, has never learned to ride a bicycle for fear of a fall, and makes various excuses for not joining the boys in games which call for hard knocks and jostling. His little six-year-old sister is a "better sport" than he is. I do feel that these tendencies, if they continue, will put him at a disadvantage with his fellows. Already he has been called a "'afraid cat' and 'sissy'."*

This is a problem in gradually building a child's courage and ability to "take it." Attempts to "shame" him or "to knock this sort of thing out of him once and for all" are not likely to

be successful. Is it possible that in your anxiety about him you become tense and condemnatory toward him and shake his self-confidence even further? A man teacher or scout master, an older boy, who is both sympathetic yet unafraid himself, may accomplish more than you or his father, who *feel* too strongly in the matter. Whoever works with him should be satisfied with small gains. For instance, use a soft ball in throwing to him, and as he becomes more proficient, graduate to harder ones. Let him practice the bicycle on a small machine first and have someone hold him or run beside him until he gains more confidence. Help him toward proficiency in such sports as tennis and swimming, where rough contact with others is not called for. If he gains satisfaction and a sense of power and bodily control at these things, general self-confidence may be furthered. Give him also plenty of scope for the less active things he may excel in—reading, handcrafts, academic achievements—whatever they may be, and make him feel by your praise and interest that you value these at least as highly as physical prowess. At no time should he regard himself as “hopeless” or inferior. Try facing with him frankly the fact that while strong in some respects he is weak in others; that many a brave man has started life with some cowardice and that perseverance can win the day.

*About six months ago, my boy, nine years of age, came home in a terribly frightened state. A man had made an attempt to assault him sexually. We took him to the doctor at once and he assured us that he was not harmed. He also said that it would be best not to refer to the episode and that the boy would forget it. Somehow, whether it is my own imagination or not, he looks worried to me and acts more easily afraid than he used to; and I have been wondering whether he would really ever forget.*

Whenever children have been subjected to such an unfortunate experience, we are left frightened and even sometimes with a feeling of guilt. We feel that we ought to have been able to prevent such an occurrence; that we ought to have safeguarded our children better. If this is how you feel, it is likely that you show much more concern about the boy's comings and goings, anxiety results, and this may communicate itself to him and account for his fear manifestations. Perhaps one of the steps indicated may be an acceptance of the experience without self-reproach on your part.

The psychiatric approach does, however, point in the direction of relieving the child of any possible guilt feeling of his own in the matter. He may have been in conflict with himself because of a possible feeling of having acquiesced in the attempted assault. Yet this would have been quite natural. I think it would be well to consult a psychiatrist and to be guided by him as to further procedure. It will reassure you and the boy, and make you freer in your own relations with him.

*On coming home late the other night and looking into my son's room, I found him wide awake. To my questions as to what was keeping him awake, he answered, “I am worrying whether I will ever make good at anything.” He seemed really anxious and concerned. Is it normal for a fifteen-year-old to be so afraid of the future?*

From time to time in the process of growing up, every adolescent has moments when he feels that he can never meet the requirements of the adult world. He thinks of himself as he is today, inexperienced and untrained, trying to pass college boards or holding down a difficult job. He sees himself so unequipped and the work before him seems so formidable that naturally he has grave misgivings about his ability and doubts whether he will ever amount to anything. The boy needs help in understanding this fallacy in his thinking. His ability to do his work in high school now can be compared to his capacity at the age of ten. He can be helped to see that the experience which must intervene before he is called on to assume adult responsibilities will equip him for successful achievement. His mother and father know how he feels because they went through the same doubts; but he can see for himself that they “made the grade.” When he understands that this uncertainty and anxiety of his is a universal experience of young people, he will be comforted, unless the feeling of inferiority is general and deep seated; in that case the problem must be met by helping him to become a success in what he is doing here and now.

*How can one best help a girl of sixteen, who is of the intellectual bookish type, rather than the “social butterfly” so popular in young crowds? She is fun-loving and fond of dances and parties, but lately rather dreads going to them, for fear she may be a wall-flower. It seems that most boys, even the intellectual and scholarly type, prefer*

*the popular girl with the "come-hither" eye. Is there any danger that a girl of this sort may develop an inferiority complex over the matter? Or will it work itself out naturally as she grows older and has a broader outlook?*

The girl of scholarly interests does have some problems which the gayer girl never has to meet. Such a girl can, of course, comprehend that her pleasure in books is and always will be an interest that will help to make life rich, exciting, and useful; but in the 'teens this is cold comfort. If the girl accepts the point of view that what seems to be a handicap may be taken as a challenge to her ingenuity, she can be helped to develop her feminine qualities more consciously.

First of all, help her make the most of her looks. If possible, go to someone who is not a beauty parlor "expert," but who combines that ability with some understanding of personality. The voice, too, may be cultivated. Good posture, or preferably body balance, may be acquired. Instead of large parties, where it is all too easy to become a wall-flower, try to arrange smaller gatherings, where there can be dancing and games and a more continuous relationship with one person. There are other ways, too, of finding congenial boy friends—hiking in small groups, hobby clubs, and so on are all fun. Such a girl may be unhappy at times, but she need not develop an inferiority complex, provided she gets satisfaction out of her pursuits and is free from parental pressure in other directions.

## Suggestions for Study: Fear—and Fears—in Childhood

### TOPICAL OUTLINE

#### 1. PREVALENCE OF FEARS

Fears are common in young children, especially between the ages of two and six; usual forms of expression—"the dark," "burglars," "wild animals," "dogs," "strangers," "kidnappers," etc.

#### 2. THE ORIGIN OF FEARS

Watson's experiments; Freudian theory; other contributions. What have they to offer to our practice as parents?

#### 3. HOW CAN THE PARENT HELP?

Understanding of their normality; protecting child from terrifying threats; approach ideal of bravery through admiration of courage rather than shame of his own fears; willingness to work slowly toward a goal; "reconditioning," building up the child's whole feeling of personal adequacy on a strong foundation.

#### 4. FEAR AND PERSONAL INSECURITY

Helping the socially timid child to gain confidence. The adolescent faces the problems of an adult world—earning a living, sex, world problems. How much shall we tell children of the "seamy side of life," poverty, disease, crime, war? What are the fundamental factors in a child's life which make for a sense of security or of insecurity?

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. A little girl of four is terrified of nearly all animals—dogs, rabbits, frogs; she even shrinks away from tiny insects. How would you proceed to help such a child develop the pleasurable interest in these creatures which other children seem to enjoy?

2. What can a teacher do to help a seven-year-old boy overcome extreme timidity? In the classroom he often sits and cries; if called on to recite, he goes into what is almost a panic. He seems frightened and overpowered by the behavior of normal rough and tumble children. His school work is good but his mother reports that he is constantly afraid of the possibility of failure.

3. Our young people ten to fourteen have developed what I can only describe as a "craze" for the morbid and terrifying. They read and discuss crime stories in the tabloids, revel in the harrowing in moving pictures, and in any unsavory story which comes along. Two of them seem to take it in their stride; the third—a boy of eleven—seems definitely upset even to the point of nausea. Why should healthy children find these things so fascinating? How far should parents attempt to control such interests?

4. A girl of seventeen, of average intelligence and pleasant appearance, is overburdened by a sense of inferiority. She cannot believe that either boys or girls could ever find her attractive—she will never be "clever" enough to make good at a job. In the presence of strangers she becomes awkward and tongue-tied. How can she be helped?

### FOR FURTHER READING

For books on this topic see the list on page 214.

# Book Reviews

## *Fear and the Psychologists*

THE problem of fear has long puzzled psychologists. Research psychologists have made elaborate studies of its manifestations as related to simple sense stimuli, while psychoanalysts have gathered much evidence to support the theory that many forms of fear and anxiety are the reflection of hidden emotional conflicts. The theories of the analysts come from careful exploration of the psychic life of individual patients; those of the psychologists largely from the experimental laboratory.

Unfortunately for the light-seeking layman, experimental research studies are likely to be deadly dull and, it must be confessed, frequently quite sterile from the point of view of everyday child training. And most psychoanalytic literature is, for the uninitiated, a mass of bewildering technicalities. Would-be popularizers have all too often added further to the confusion, exploiting the journalistic possibilities of fear psychology with more eye to sensationalism than accurate interpretation. Thus we find books like Grace Adams' recently published *Don't Be Afraid* spreading broadcast a mass of questionable advice based on half-digested psychological facts.

The most accurate and helpful popular interpretations come from well grounded scientific workers in these fields—though unfortunately it is hard to name any single book which treats adequately all the diverse contributions. Brief articles representative of various points of view may be found in the April, 1931, issue of *CHILD STUDY*, devoted to *Children's Fears*. Chapters from a number of books may be suggested. Practical problems of training and management with something of the theoretic background are helpfully discussed by Douglas A. Thom in the chapter on "Fear" in his *Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child*; by Mary Cover Jones, in her article on "Prevention and Treatment of Children's Fears" in *The New Generation*; and by Arnold Gesell in the discussion of "Early Fear and Fortitude" in *The Guidance of Mental Growth in Infant and Child*. An unusually clear and simple exposition of the psychoanalytic interpretation is Emanuel Miller's paper on "Childish Fears" in a symposium on *How the Mind Works*. The basic tenets of the behaviorists are set forth by John B. Watson in the chapters on

"Unlearned Behavior and Emotion" in his *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*; and subsequent research, which has to some extent modified his position, is described briefly by Buford Johnson in her discussion of "Emotion" in her scholarly, but rather difficult, *Child Psychology*.

The most recent addition to these researches, a monograph on *Children's Fears* by Jersild and Holmes, of Teachers College (Child Development Monograph No. 20), concerns itself largely with academic questions, but yields a few points of practical interest for parents. In addition to a report of the authors' recent studies, this volume includes a clear summary of their own earlier work, together with that of Jones, English, Valentine, Irwin, Ellisor, and others. On the basis of this survey, Drs. Jersild and Holmes conclude that the very young child probably fears any novel, intense, or unexpected stimulus with which he is unable to cope and for which he has no adequate response. They agree with those who have taken issue with Watson's view that there are only *two* innate fears—of noise and of loss of support—and that all others are conditioned upon them.

They agree also with Gesell and Jones in contending that maturation—that is, the child's innate organic development—must be taken into account. Hard as it is to draw the line between inner maturation and external experience, they find repeated evidence that both factors are at work in changing the child's fear responses. And they raise other questions which, though as yet unanswered, at least make it evident to them that Watson's theory is an oversimplification of the facts. Why, they ask, are some fears transient while others persist? Why does conditioning sometimes result from a primary fear situation and sometimes not? When it does, what determines the direction it will take? What of anxieties, phobias, and feelings of guilt and insecurity—how do they fit into the behavioristic theory?

These workers are considerably impressed by the marked individual differences in susceptibility to fear—and their unpredictable character. As they themselves point out, much more intense study is needed to explain the differences in response of different

children and even of the same child at different times. One could wish that they had gone further with their limited attempt to study this phase of the problem. The findings of this part of the study were largely negative; but one cannot help feeling that the techniques of investigation, as described, were far from complete. A more thorough study of parental and sibling attitudes and relationships and of the total emotional history of the child—to say nothing of the child's own phantasy life as revealed in play—might have yielded much more suggestive results. Here, one feels, is a promising line of investigation.

Perhaps the most positive results obtained by these investigators relate to the age distribution of various types of fear. During infancy the child's fears are aroused by the immediate properties of stimuli that impinge upon him. With age, he becomes immune to fear from certain sources and susceptible to others which previously had no effect. Between the ages of two and five there is a sharp decline in the frequency of fear responses to concrete stimuli—such as noise, strange objects, or falling—and a contrasting increase in fears of imagined, anticipated, and supernatural dangers. From five on there is an increase in fears regarding one's status—fear of ridicule, of failure, and so on.

While the facts of maturation and widening experience go far toward explaining these trends, it is interesting to speculate on the correlation between the increased imaginary fears in the two- to five-year-old period, and the intense emotional conflicts which psychoanalysis has pointed out as characteristic of this age. The desirability of joint investigation by psychologists and psychiatrists is strongly suggested here, as at other points in this study.

In a supplementary study—*Methods of Overcoming Children's Fears*—the same authors examine the success of various methods, as reported in parental interviews, and conclude that "the most effective techniques in overcoming fears are those that help the child to become more competent and skillful and that encourage him to undertake active dealings with the thing that he fears."

H. G. S.

#### CHILDREN'S FEARS

By Arthur T. Jersild and Frances B. Holmes.

(Child Development Monograph No. 20) Teachers College, 1935

#### METHODS OF OVERCOMING CHILDREN'S FEARS

By same authors.

Journal of Psychology, Vol. I, pp. 75-104

#### THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF CHILDREN'S FEAR

By Mary Coter Jones. In The New Generation, ed. by Calverton and Schmalhausen. Macaulay, 1930

#### EVERYDAY PROBLEMS OF THE EVERYDAY CHILD

Appleton, 1932

Chapter X—Fear

#### CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

By Buford J. Johnson.

Chapter IX—Emotion

Thomas, 1932

#### THE GUIDANCE OF MENTAL GROWTH IN INFANT AND CHILD

Macmillan, 1930

Chapter XI—Early Fear and Fortitude

#### PSYCHOLOGY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF A BEHAVIORIST

Lippincott, 1924

By John B. Watson.

Chapter VI—Unlearned Behavior—Emotions

#### HOW THE MIND WORKS

By Cyril Burt, Ernest Jones, Emanuel Miller, and William Moodie.

Chapter VIII—Childish Fears

Appleton-Century, 1934

#### CHILDREN'S FEARS

Child Study Magazine, April, 1931

Articles by John Levy, Joseph Jastrow, Marion M. Miller, Mary Coter Jones, Marion E. Kenworthy, and E. Van Norman Emery.

## What Shall We Tell the Children?

(Continued from page 206)

tainty, confusion, terror, insecurity. Silence or evasion may make it all the more mystifying; too much preoccupation with it may tend to create either morbidity or shallowness; but a sincere sharing of grief with the child and helping him toward the creation of fresh interests and new ties of affection may prove healing and beneficent.

After the passing of a dearly loved grandfather a girl of eight remarked to her mother, "We won't see grandpa any more, will we? But we can remember!"

Death as inevitable, death as pain-producing, death as a hurt beyond all telling, we know these things, some of us all too well. And yet we must learn to accept tragedy and sorrow as inescapable, and to seek solace where we can—in cherished memories, absorbing and satisfying pursuits, through service, and by means of wider associations and enriched understanding.

It becomes evident that in any attempt to help a child understand and master his fears, we must first come to terms with our own. We must also try to analyze and understand all the elements involved and the underlying significance of his individual responses to happenings and events. We do not wish to base children's hopes on faulty assumptions or to give them false security; we desire rather to help them face life as it is. We hope that it may not be devoid of beauty and grandeur. We would that they may grow in ability to rise to life's difficult demands. And specifically, as to the fears which they must inevitably face, we hope they may learn that "courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace."

# Science Contributes—

## A Current Point of View on the Organic Basis of Mind

WITH all our concern over child training, we need to remind ourselves that training does not go on in a vacuum; that there is an organic basis for human life. Psychology—the parent-science of "child study"—has shown us the importance of guidance and of environment and has given us techniques of incalculable value; what is more, it has made us realize how much we can actually *do* for our children.

But we must remember, as Dr. Foster Kennedy said in a recent address, that "the mind is to the brain as sight is to the eye." And not only specific capacities like intellect and vision but also that mysterious sum total called "personality," have their roots in the individual's physical organism.

Speaking on "The Organic Background of Mind" at the New York Academy of Medicine on March 12, Dr. Kennedy pointed out that this relationship has been dramatically illustrated by one of the most recent discoveries regarding the organism of the brain. During an epidemic of sleeping sickness (an infection of the brain) it was found that the lesions caused by this infection cause the most astounding derangements of the emotional life. Certain other organic factors which influence the personality had already been recognized, particularly the glands of internal secretion. These glands directly affect the sympathetic nervous system and, through this channel, the brain. Future studies, as these findings seem to suggest, may reveal that the control of our emotional lives, like that of our mental faculties, is basically related to the brain organism.

Although our scientific knowledge of the brain's structure and functions is still far from complete, it has, as Dr. Kennedy showed, made great progress in its brief history. Everything we do know emphasizes its enormous complexity. To begin with, the brain is made up of a thousand million cells, each in itself as complete and individual as any individual human being. Moreover, there are within the brain a number of differentiated functional centers; specific groups of cells are related to specific functions, such as vision, speech, hearing, and thought. Jackson, one of the pioneers of the generation just past, located three of these centers and later investigators have carried his

work much further. They have discovered, for instance, that not only are there specialized areas in the cortex, but that each of these centers is made up of specialized kinds of cells. It has also been found that the relation between the physical senses and the brain is reciprocal—the senses are controlled by their particular brain centers, but the brain in turn must be stimulated through the senses in order to develop and to learn.

In the process of learning, something—we do not yet know what—happens to the brain cells so that in some way they retain the pattern of what we have learned. This learning, or pattern-forming, process is in turn the organic basis of habit formation. For habits are brain patterns which result in immediate action without the intervention of conscious thought. In other words, a habit is a direct and automatic response to a familiar stimulus. Since the individual can act more quickly on this automatic level, habits are very useful. But in certain conditions, such as fear and fatigue, these automatic responses seem to be temporarily lost so that the individual can no longer depend upon them. An air-pilot, for instance, cannot fly his plane safely when assailed by the emotion of fright or by physical weariness. For he can no longer depend on the automatic habits necessary for handling his machine skilfully.

Observations on the effect of brain disease and injury have further shown that when certain parts of the brain are impaired or destroyed we lose the corresponding faculties. But it has also been found that if the cells are only slightly diseased, the more complicated and recent patterns of learning break down before the simpler and earlier ones. If the disease continues as a process of gradual disintegration, the power to speak a foreign tongue would, for example, disappear before the power of speech *per se*; and the ability to read—that is, to *interpret* visual symbols—would go before the ability to *see* the letters. But if the injury is one which can be healed or repaired, the learned powers may gradually return. For example, a skilled artist, immediately after an accident which temporarily injured a portion of her brain, was able to draw only the most rudimentary

*(Continued on page 224)*

# In the Magazines

*The Power of Ghosts.* By C. E. A. Winslow. *Mental Hygiene*, January, 1936.

The various types of demons, witches, werewolves, and ghosts which have terrorized the people of various lands in the past are likened to the unreasoned fears of snakes, mice, thunderstorms, heights, or small spaces experienced by many of us today. These are "instinctive terrors associated with an idea or a group of ideas bound together by a strong emotional bond, but lying so far below the level of consciousness that our reason cannot analyze it." International, industrial, and social conflicts are induced by similar "ghosts"—unreasoning fears and emotional attitudes which make impossible a dispassionate approach to the practical problems involved. Mental hygiene suggests that these "ghosts" can be exorcised only by means of "light to recognize the existence of the fear complex," "courage to face our own world reactions as part of our life problem," and to "discount them with a tolerant humor that robs them of their power over our souls."

*Character Development Goals for Preschool Children.* By Shirley Newson and Lee Vincent. *Childhood Education*, March, 1936.

In educating for character the preschool teacher must know "what it is she wishes to build and must have some idea of how to build it." A list of ultimate goals is suggested and correlated with immediate objectives on the preschool level. Teachers are warned, however, against pressing for early perfection at the risk of strain and tension.

*A New Education Needs a New World.* By Harold J. Laski. *The Social Frontier*, February, 1936.

We not only require more education but a different education. There is need for more schools, more teachers, a longer school period, and a curriculum designed to meet a new world. But "those who seek any serious adaptation of our educational system must work for the transformation of our economic system as the necessary condition of their success."

*Integrating Psychiatry with Education.* By V. V. Anderson. *Educational Method*, February, 1936.

A somewhat specialized school, designed primarily for the education of children with personality difficulties, is described in detail by its director. The coordination of the psychiatric service with the educational and social program is of special interest.

*A High School and Its Immigrant Community—A Challenge and an Opportunity.* By Leonard Covello. *Journal of Educational Sociology*, February, 1936.

The principal of a public school in a district where seventy-eight per cent of the residents are of foreign stock contends that the many problems of such a community are a major concern of the school which educates its children. With the objective of building a finer citizenship and a better community life for all he has organized a community Advisory Council—in which the school is cooperating with the other social agencies of the district.

*If Not Punishment—What?* By Ethel B. Waring. *Parents' Magazine*, March, 1936.

"Redirection" is more helpful than punishment because it educates rather than inhibits. The reasons for a child's misbehavior should be studied; he should be praised for any desirable part of his behavior. "In giving approval for the child's successes use the same words you used when you told him what to do, and eventually he will think them when he tells himself to do it, and hence become independent of your direction or approval."

*Money Troubles of the Adolescent.* By Sidonie M. Gruenberg. *New Era*, February, 1936.

The prolonged financial dependence of youth due to unemployment exaggerates the tensions characteristic of this period. "A sympathetic insight into the emotional conflicts of youth should go far toward enabling parents to avoid the misuse of money as an instrument of coercion or a threat to the security of youth." The difficulties of adolescence can be lessened by starting an allowance at an early age and by telling the children as much as possible about the family's financial status.

# News and Notes

The season now drawing to its close has been one of the Child Study Association's most active. The Association has felt to the full its share in the financial limitations under which all educational organizations have had in recent years to work. But in spite of a much reduced staff, the increasing demands for its services have been met and its interests have continued to expand—as indicated by the following "high spot" summary of activities for 1935-36:

**STUDY GROUPS**—649 parents, 25 community workers, and 15 parent education leaders have been enrolled in 8 study groups and 4 unit courses. This represents an increase of more than 40% over last year. Service has also been given to 54 affiliated groups.

**LEADERSHIP TRAINING**—6 student leaders have been enrolled under a special "interne" training plan, which draws upon the full resources of the Association and offers each student individualized experience and counseling to meet her particular needs. A Course on Personality Traits, for leaders, has had an enrollment of 15. Opportunities have been given prospective leaders to make presentations of parent education material under staff supervision and with the benefit of constructive suggestion and criticism.

**LECTURES AND EXHIBITS**—1,200 persons have attended 4 public meetings and exhibits. 153 persons subscribed to a lecture course of 8 meetings on Women in Conflict; this course was followed by a discussion group of 5 sessions in which 35 were enrolled.

**CONSULTATION SERVICE**—361 consultations with 109 individuals have been held by members of the Consultation Service staff. Of special significance is the fact that in several divorce situations the advice of the Consultation Service has recently been sought in making provisions for the children involved. The total number of cases for the 7 years of this service is 688.

**COMMITTEES**—150 members have taken part in committee activities. The recently formed Committee on Radio for Children has prepared 2 selected lists of programs for children which have been published and distributed by the Radio Institute of the Audible

Arts. A brochure by the Director, Mrs. Gruenberg, has also been issued by the Institute.

**PARENTS' QUESTIONS**—A new book by members of the Association staff was published in January by Harper and Brothers. The publication date was made the occasion for a luncheon at the Hotel Commodore, which was attended by more than 700 persons. The speeches of this luncheon were broadcast over a national hook-up.

**OTHER PUBLICATIONS**—8 current publications (in addition to *CHILD STUDY*) include the brochure and radio lists mentioned above, *Books of the Year for Children*, *Inexpensive Books for Children*, *Community Programs for Summer Play Schools*, and revisions of *A Parents' Bookshelf* and *The Story of a Child Study Group*.

5,562 pieces of literature have been sold by the Association; 1,800 requests for free material have been filled; 75,000 pieces of literature (including magazines, programs, and announcements) have been distributed to members and others.

**LIBRARY**—900 persons have been served by the Alice Morgenthau Ehrich Memorial Library, which now contains over 4,000 volumes. All books have been passed by the Bibliography Committee, which has reviewed 60 books during the current year, of which 34 were added to the Library. A cumulative list of all books of interest in parent education is also kept continuously up to date.

**LECTURES AND SPEECHES**—159 lectures, teaching estimated audiences totaling 12,000, have been given for 101 organizations, under the auspices of the Speakers Bureau, which is largely composed of Association staff members. Courses of lectures have been arranged for 10 of these organizations.

The Director and members of the Association staff have participated in the programs of 16 state and national conferences, including the Progressive Education Association, National Conference of Social Work, Connecticut Valley Home Economics Association, Delaware Citizens Association, New Jersey State Department of Health, National Organization for Public Health Nursing, New England Conference of National Council of Jewish Women,

Illinois State League of Nursing Education, New Jersey Department of Home Economics, etc.

**COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**—250 organizations (in addition to those mentioned above) including educational institutions, welfare groups, public schools, churches, women's clubs, normal schools, colleges, and others, have received cooperation in planning programs, courses, etc. Articles have been contributed to 15 national publications.

The interest of public health nurses in securing training in this field is a significant development which offers valuable opportunity for extending parent education through these professional groups interested in the family.

**PLAY SCHOOLS**—2,500 children were enrolled in Play Schools affiliated with the Association and conducted throughout the 19th summer of this department's work. These Play Schools offer all-day care for children and guidance for their parents, and serve as demonstration centers for other organizations. 48 agencies cooperated in the program; of these the Board of Education's teacher assistance was most vital. 150 teachers, directors, and social workers participated.

13 study groups, enrolling approximately 200 play school mothers, held 6 to 10 meetings each during the winter as well as summer months.

The Board of Education, during the past year, organized 60 summer play schools, based on the Play School idea, serving 8,500 city children.

**CHILD STUDY—** What do you want to read in *CHILD STUDY* next year? In planning coming issues *CHILD STUDY* will welcome your suggestions. The following topics are now being considered:

**BACK TO SCHOOL—PROBLEMS OF  
SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT**

**HABITS AND ROUTINES—**

**THEIR PLACE IN THE CHILD'S LIFE**

**TEACHING THE "CARDINAL VIRTUES" TODAY**

**SCIENCE CONTRIBUTES—A SURVEY OF RECENT  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

**CHILDREN'S PART IN THE CHANGING SOCIAL ORDER**

**WOMEN IN CONFLICT—MOTHERS AS  
PARENTS AND AS PEOPLE**

Will you tell us—on a postcard—which of these topics you like best? And still more important, will

you suggest other topics which you think should be discussed in these pages? Address—The Editor, *CHILD STUDY*, 221 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York, N. Y.

*Safety Education in Home and School*

Safety education which puts its emphasis on intelligent caution and experience rather than on prohibition is being fostered by a variety of organizations. Most recent of these efforts is the expanded program of traffic safety education sponsored by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. This movement will be directed toward educating parents and children, in their homes and in the schools, to assume personal responsibility for improving highway safety conditions. The program, which is under the direction of Miss Marian L. Telford, National Congress Chairman and Consultant on Child Safety and Director of Field Activities for the National Safety Council, includes the following points: sponsorship of standard schoolboy safety patrols; proper marking for streets approaching schools; strict observance of laws governing minimum age for young drivers; instruction in driving for high school students; cooperation with police in securing maximum protection at school crossings; support of the drivers' license law; and improvement of school bus facilities.

A particularly significant development is the growing tendency among educators to accept safety education as a fundamental educational responsibility. They are beginning to think of it not only in terms of teaching school children to cross streets safely but also in terms of school instruction for young people in the essentials of safe driving.

*Man and the Motor Car*,\* a text-book for high school use, has been approved by Agnes Samuelson, President of the National Education Association, and includes contributions from such outstanding educators and safety engineers as Professor Judd, Paul Hanna, Willard Beatty, Miller McClintock, Harold Rugg, C. B. Veal, George Wellington, and William McAndrew. With simple diagrams and pictures, and with an authoritative application of experimental psychology, these specialists present essential principles, not only on automobile mechanisms and codes of the road but also on the art of driving, and the psychology and attitudes of the driver and the pedestrian.

\* *Man and the Motor Car*. Albert W. Whitney, Editor. National Bureau of Casualty and Surety Underwriters, 1 Park Avenue, New York. 256 pp. Single copies, \$1.00. 10 or more copies, \$0.45.

Automobile instruction may soon become part of the regular course in high schools and colleges. Detroit schools have gone into it on an extensive scale. Indiana is requiring a thorough course in the mechanics and management of cars. State College, Pennsylvania, holds, as its Professor Neyhart puts it, that the automobile menace will never be conquered until every person permitted to take a wheel has had a training as thorough as that of the airplane pilot. In his town the high school pupils are taken out, four at a time, and are shifted from observing to driving under expert instruction until each has had a total of eight hours at the wheel and twenty-four hours of concentrated observing. Out of eighty-seven young drivers so instructed, who have now driven 20,000 miles each, not one has had so much as a scratched fender.

*Experiments  
in Radio  
Education*

The National Broadcasting Company has recently accepted two new educational radio programs prepared by the Educational Radio Project of the Federal Office of Education. One series is entitled *Have You Heard?* and is designed to give facts and stimulate interest in general science. A second, called *Answer Me This*, is a series of self-tests which is expected to send listeners scurrying to their dictionaries, atlases, and encyclopedias. The Project also presents *Education in the News*, featuring weekly developments in education.

These programs have been prepared by the Educational Radio Project, under the direction of William Dow Boutwell, editor-in-chief of the Office of Education. All programs are submitted to an advisory committee including Ned Dearborn, New York University, Sidonie Gruenberg, Child Study Association, Edward Murrow, Columbia Broadcasting Company, and Franklin Dunham, National Broadcasting Company. Preparation of scripts and production are under the supervision respectively of Maurice Lowell and Leo Rosencrans, both experienced members of the National Broadcasting Company's staff. For workers on the project—men and women selected from WPA rolls in Washington, New York, and elsewhere, and talented ex-CCC men—the enterprise will be a school, as well as an occupation, which will equip them for future occupational opportunities.

In commenting upon its purpose Dr. J. W. Studebaker, U. S. Commissioner of Education, recently said, "Use of the marvelous powers of radio for education has been a bright hope since radio began.

Broadcasters have eagerly sought educational programs which would also be good radio. Relatively few educational institutions have been able to solve the difficult problem of mastering the techniques of this new medium. This Project has been established to supply the requests of the broadcasters and to demonstrate, I hope, that educators can produce listenable educational radio programs. At the outset, at least, it will attempt no programs which are instructional, in the school sense. If the programs induce some activity or thinking on the part of listeners or add to their store of knowledge, they will fulfill the objective of educational broadcasting."

**Educational Radio Project—NBC**

**Have You Heard?**  
Fridays, 6:35 p.m. EST—Red Network

**Answer Me This**  
Mondays, 6:35 p.m. EST—Blue Network

**Education in the News**  
Mondays, 7:45 p.m. EST—Red Network

*All the Children* In addition to all that the federally sponsored Emergency Nursery Schools have done for the thousands of children and parents directly served, this educational experiment has been a significant means of focusing attention on the needs of *all* the nation's children. In the first annual report (for 1933-34) which has just been published by the National Advisory Committee on Emergency Nursery Schools, perhaps the most significant section is that which describes the children served and the homes from which they come. The reports on administration and on teacher training, important as they are to those professionally interested, cannot reveal the human background so clearly. This survey of the children themselves, which was made by John E. Anderson, Director of the Institute of Child Welfare of the University of Minnesota, shows that over ten thousand children in all parts of the country were enrolled in Emergency Nursery Schools. For the purposes of comparing these children with children in the general population, the reports of three thousand children between two and six, and representing every part of the country, were balanced against the same number of White House Conference reports, made in the late 1920's, and representing the same distribution.

*(Continued on page 224)*

# Magazines for Children

TO MANY of us who remember with a glow of affection how, in our own childhood, we treasured our *St. Nicholas* or *Youth's Companion*, the monthly arrival of a magazine seems to be one of childhood's legitimate pleasures. To other parents, who already "view with alarm" the inroads of present-day "light entertainment" upon their children's cultural pursuits, magazine-reading appears as but another opiate, discouraging creative effort and blurring finer appreciations. Still others feel that with so much available to children today, both in entertainment and in cultural resources—radio, movies, quantities of good books—magazines are superfluous. In our own childhood there was no such wealth to draw upon!

Much might be said for all these views. But actually the question can be answered only in terms of a particular child and his particular age, interests, even geographical location. The reading needs of the child in rural or suburban regions are quite unlike those of the city child with libraries, museums, and amusement centers clustered about his very doorstep. But for most children there is still a thrill of importance in receiving this mail personally addressed. Yet this pleasure in itself will pall, unless the magazine inside the wrapper maintains its own interest.

What that interest will be may vary for different children. Young children welcome the magazine for its ephemeral character—here is a book in which they may cut, paste, sew, or scribble with impunity. For somewhat older children the stories are the thing, probably for the very reason that they are short, unassuming, and assorted. Then too there is the fascination of cross-word and picture puzzles. The young adolescent finds in periodical literature various things—perhaps (like his elders) a welcome relief from the more serious reading that has come to be expected of him; perhaps a bit of light entertainment to enliven a dull moment; or perhaps the pursuit of some special interest or hobby.

Magazines for children fall into three general categories, serving three distinct purposes: recreational; special interests and hobbies; current affairs and news.

Recreational magazines must cover a wider range of interest than does any single book; they are the largest "money's worth" to a family of several

children. Any one child will choose what appeals to him, and leave the rest. In selecting magazines we cannot apply purely literary standards, but must be guided rather by the immediate purpose to be served, for stories and departments are bound to be uneven in quality.

## *For the youngest (six to ten):*

**CHILD LIFE**—A gay, popular type of magazine, which offers an excellent variety of entertainment in stories, verse, puzzles, cut-outs, pictures, and special interests, with an accent on humor and nonsense.

**STORY PARADE**—A new publication with promising educational sponsorship, which contains short stories and verses of authentic literary quality, dignified also by excellent illustration and fine printing.

## *For somewhat older children (ten to thirteen):*

**ST. NICHOLAS**—An old favorite, which, after several years of change and difficulties, is "coming back" both in interest and quality. The stories, special interest pages, and particularly the "League," inviting contributions of stories, poems, and pictures from young readers, are a continued source of inspiration and appeal.

**For girls (twelve to fifteen):** (With adolescence comes a wide cleft in the reading interests of boys and girls.)

**THE AMERICAN GIRL**—A wide range of interests in a variety of material, presented to appeal to the average girl of today.

## *For boys (twelve to fifteen):*

**BOY'S LIFE**—Typical modern adventure stories and special interest departments. While some of its pages are devoted to scouting and boy-scout interests, the lively stories, good illustrations, humor, as well as woodcraft and hobby articles, will be of interest to any boy of this age.

Hobby magazines are valuable to serve, but not to create, the special interests of young people. Such magazines are available on a wide range of subjects—nature, mechanical science, boating, hunting, fishing, stamps, and so on. Some of these are addressed to adults but are read avidly by young devotees. Among those especially suitable for children are:

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC—Addressed to adults but of unusual interest to children of all ages, appealing not only for its natural science and travel material, but also for its numerous superb photographs of people and places the world over.

NATURE MAGAZINE—A reliable reference magazine covering many phases of nature material—animals, plants, geology—drawn from authentic sources and illustrated with beautiful photographs.

POPULAR SCIENCE and POPULAR MECHANICS—Dealing with events and findings in the scientific and mechanical world, including shop notes and suggestions for construction; profusely illustrated with drawings and diagrams.

Current-interest periodicals for young people, many of which are published for supplementary class-room use, necessarily reflect the social and economic point of view of their sponsorship. For home reading parents naturally prefer for their children those which seem in accord with their own viewpoint and social concepts.

Outstanding among such periodicals for the high school age is:

SCHOLASTIC—A magazine of contemporary life, literary interests, and other timely subjects. Though primarily intended for high school use, it should also prove valuable for home reading, since it is readable, stimulating, and thought-provoking in the many fields of current interest which it covers.

Children's Book Committee  
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Child Life.....	\$35 a copy; \$3.00 a year
Rand McNally & Co.	111 Eighth Ave., N. Y.
St. Nicholas.....	\$25 a copy; \$3.00 a year
Am. Education Press.	40 So. Third St., Columbus, O.
Boy's Life.....	\$10 a copy; \$1.00 a year
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The American Girl.....	\$15 a copy; \$1.50 a year
Girl Scouts, Inc.	570 Lexington Ave., N. Y.
Story Parade.....	\$15 a copy; \$1.00 a year
Story Parade, Inc.	70 Fifth Ave., N. Y.
The National Geographic.....	\$50 a copy; \$3.50 a year
Nat. Geographic Soc.	16th and M Sts., N.W., Wash., D. C.
Nature Magazine.....	\$25 a copy; \$3.00 a year
Am. Nature Assn.	1214 16th St., N.W., Wash., D. C.
Popular Science.....	\$15 a copy; \$1.50 a year
Popular Science Pub. Co.	381 Fourth Ave., N. Y.
Popular Mechanics.....	\$25 a copy; \$2.50 a year
Popular Mechanics Pub. Co.	350 Fifth Ave., N. Y.
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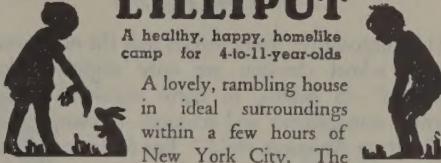
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## News and Notes

(Continued from page 219)

This comparative study reveals that the emergency nursery school children are only slightly below "standard"—in health, in home surroundings, in parental management and training—as compared to the "average American child." But far from suggesting that the children of the depression are "not so badly off after all," Dr. Anderson points out that even in "good times" a large proportion of our children grow up in homes which are woefully lacking in physical conveniences and cultural equipment. "Although the emergency nursery school makes a direct contribution to the lives of the children who come to it from sharply limited environments, with the passing of the emergency we must not forget that in prosperous times too a very large portion of young American children live under conditions that are far from ideal. For these, as for the children of the depression, there is enough to be done to engage our best thought and most strenuous efforts."

*Modern Youth Speaks for Itself* What do our high school boys and girls themselves consider their most important problems today? A group of outstanding authorities on youth's

problems has recently undertaken a survey to answer this question. High school students in a thousand key communities throughout the country will be given an opportunity to express their frank opinion as to their prospects. To stimulate their interest the survey will take the form of a contest with awards for the best brief essays on "not what you think you *should* think, but what you *really do* think."

The survey is being conducted under the auspices of *Building America*, the magazine for young people published by the Society for Curriculum Study. It will be directed by the editor, Dr. James E. Mendenhall. Those cooperating include: Judge Ben B. Lindsey of the Superior Court, Los Angeles, California; Katherine Glover, Editor of the Committee on Youth Problems, U. S. Office of Education; Mrs. Paul Rittenhouse, National Director of the Girl Scouts; Frances M. Foster, Editor of Progressive Education; Fairfield Osborn, Jr., former New York State Director of the National Youth Administration; and William Hinckley, Chairman of the American Youth Congress.

In commenting on the survey Dr. Mendenhall

pointed out that, with one-fourth of all our young people between sixteen and twenty-four neither employed nor in school, there has been an increasing trend on the part of American youth to take a serious view of its future. Yet adults have few ways of knowing how young people themselves really feel. It is hoped that this will be revealed by the results of this survey, which will be published in the May 15th issue of *Building America*. For further information address the editorial office, 425 West 123d Street, New York.

## Science Contributors—

(Continued from page 215)

forms, comparable to the work of a young child. Yet as the injury healed, her powers returned—not all at once, but repeating gradually the history of the original learning process. Moreover, in addition to what the individual learns—from simple to complex—in his own lifetime, each human embryo has repeated the evolutionary cycle of the race and retains these earlier nerve patterns. As our complicated nervous system grows up, these earlier layers are successively submerged and controlled by later and more highly developed layers. When disease has impaired the brain cells which control a more highly developed "human" faculty, it therefore sometimes happens that the still earlier, animal-like forms of automatic response will appear.

The Freudian theory of psychoanalysis has traced a similar evolution in the emotions during the individual's development, and it has been pointed out that this process reflects our growth from purely animal preoccupations to the human level of emotional control. Psychoanalytic studies make it clear that in emotional regression—as in physical injury or disease of the brain—we lose the more complex adjustments first, and that as these go, we revert to more and more primitive emotional levels.

By pointing out some of the significant findings of this science, which is still in its infancy, Dr. Kennedy implied throughout his address the necessity of considering all the phenomena of human life as closely knit aspects of a single complex entity. It is true that personality and intelligence can be and are tremendously affected by training and environment; but we should also be aware that they cannot exist apart from their organic basis.

# The Editors' Page



ONE of the distinguishing characteristics of both fiction and biography during the last half century is their concern with children. The heroes of the romantic and epic classics of the past either "sprang full-formed from the head of Jove," or if childhood were permitted them, it was likely to be as out-of-the-ordinary as their later exploits. But with the coming of realism, the childhood years of literary heroes became both less remarkable and more important—and the business of growing up was discovered to make astonishingly good reading. Indeed, though modern psychologists have given us more and more knowledge *about* childhood and its needs, it is still the literary artist who gives us the clearest glimpses of what it *feels like* to be a child.

THE glimpses of childhood quoted in the following pages have been chosen for this quality of emotional insight. Although the selections cover a wide range of age and situation, they are offered here, not as a compendium, but as "temptations" to further reading—recalling some older books and suggesting some newer ones. Because only a small part of what is available could be included in this limited space, the less recent standard works have for the most part been omitted, as being both more remote from our own lives and more generally read; certain other books could not be used because the terms of the copyright make it impossible for the publishers to give permission for reprinting. Since in any case no selection could be truly "representative," it is hoped that CHILD STUDY readers will go on—in the books listed on page 249 and in others—to share with those who have compiled this issue the joys of discovering for themselves these poignant memories of childhood.

THE Editorial Board wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the publishers who have cooperated so generously in giving permission for the reprinting of these readings, and to the Sub-Committee of the Association's Bibliography Committee which undertook the heavy task of reading and preliminary selection. To HELEN G. STERNAU, chairman of this Sub-Committee, special thanks are due for her discriminating and indefatigable work. The publishers' names are given with the titles of the books on the Contents Page; the members of the Sub-Committee are listed on the same page.

# CHILD STUDY

## A JOURNAL OF PARENT EDUCATION

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MAY, 1936

No. 8

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### CHILDHOOD IN LITERATURE

#### *Readings from Fiction and Biography*

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Mrs. Bechtel was formerly head of the Children's Book Department of the Macmillan Company. Her article is taken from a longer address made by Mrs. Bechtel at the Child Study Association's Children's Book Exhibit, on December 3.

The works from which these excerpts are taken are covered by publishers' copyrights as indicated in the data accompanying each reading. They are reprinted here by permission of the publishers.

This issue has been edited with the cooperation of the Association's Bibliography Committee, of which Elinor G. Leeb is Chairman, and especially of its Sub-Committee on Childhood in Literature. The members of the Sub-Committee are: Helen G. Sternau, Chairman, Clara F. Blitzer, Marjorie M. Boyd, Helen S. Burgess, Sally B. Childs, Pauline R. Fadiman, Mae L. Falk, Rhoda H. Kohn, Ruth H. Langner, Nina P. Lowenstein, Jane E. Marcus, and Marcia S. Shohan.

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